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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM	(Thailand)
later:	Mr. WLOSOWICZ (Vice-Chairman)	(Poland)

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AGENDA ITEM 74: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 74: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued) (A/SPC/46/169 and Add.1, 185, 254 and 591; A/SPC/46/L.9)

1. Mr. POSSO (Ecuador) said that the universally high expectations surrounding peace-keeping operations had led to calls for their use in preventing conflicts before they occurred. Such preventive use, while opening up a large and fertile field of action, would in each instance involve very sensitive assessments of the regional or even national circumstances that might justify such an operation. Also, because of their vast range of applicability, preventive peace-keeping operations would have to become essentially civilian rather than primarily military in nature, in order to deal with such things as natural disasters, economic calamities, social emergencies or even delicate political situations. The recent operations during the Haitian elections or in the aftermath of the Gulf war were cases in point.

2. The possible expansion of the scope of peace-keeping operations made it all the more imperative for the United Nations to assume the administrative responsibility of putting them on a secure institutional, legal and financial basis. The reports of the Secretary-General (A/46/169 and Add.1, and 185) and of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations (A/46/254) showed that efforts to make the needed structural changes and to establish uniform peace-keeping procedures had, in fact, been under way for some years. Continued attention must be given to supplying operations with needed equipment and appropriate manpower, including civilian staff, and personnel should receive training also in the requisite civilian specializations.

3. Funding, composition of the forces, cooperation between the receiving State and the relevant United Nations organs, training of the international troop contingent, and the use of advanced technology were the crucial components of any peace-keeping operation. While it was true that the financial burden must be evenly distributed among all Member States, Ecuador believed that there must be a corresponding international solidarity when it came to the make-up of the forces and their maintenance and equipment. In those areas, the developing countries were currently bearing a disproportionate share, for which they should receive some sort of compensation.

4. The persistence of crucial structural problems connected with peace-keeping operations demanded the preparation of a model agreement between the United Nations and the receiving countries, the establishment of reliable financing that included new sources of funding, an expansion of the geographical base of the composition of the forces, increased cooperation between States and the Secretariat, and the use of standardized troop-training manuals.

(Mr. Posso, Ecuador)

5. There was cause for optimism in the successful work being done by the many peace-keeping operations currently in place. Ecuador itself had willingly contributed troops to the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) and to the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).

6. Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria) observed that the remarkable political developments of the past year had created a climate conducive to peace and revitalized the capability of the United Nations to resolve conflicts. The commitment of Member States to the Charter and to international law and the use of peace-keeping forces were critical elements in the maintenance of peace and security. His delegation welcomed the peace-keeping operations that had been recently set up and hoped that operations in Western Sahara and Cambodia would soon be in full swing.

7. Nigeria had been an active participant in United Nations peace-keeping operations for three decades and had also taken part in regional peace-keeping efforts such as the West African peace-keeping force created to restore Liberia to normal.

8. The new global amity would certainly increase the demand for United Nations peace-keeping operations, and the Organization should respond to those demands in a way that upheld the Charter principles of State sovereignty and non-intervention in domestic matters. The United Nations could not afford to be partisan either in the selection of peace-keeping forces or in the implementation of their mandate. Its tradition of neutrality should be maintained and it should move with circumspection into the area of peace-making and into the promising new field of preventive diplomacy.

9. Peace-keeping operations must be effective in terms of time and resources. The recent use of some civilian personnel in conflict areas, for instance, had proven salutary for the local population, and Nigeria supported continuation of the practice.

10. Recent developments in various regions of the world had necessitated collaboration between the United Nations and certain regional groups carrying on their own peace-keeping efforts. Such shared peace-keeping experience would enhance the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and make global peace-keeping more effective.

11. On the question of the training of civilian, police and military personnel for peace-keeping operations, some non-governmental organizations were to be commended for making facilities available for training. Nigeria urged Member States with training facilities to allow other States to take advantage of them. It also encouraged the organization of regional seminars in which views could be exchanged and experience shared, thus providing useful information in the event of a peace-keeping operation in the region, and reducing the start-up time. Member States themselves should organize symposia to enlighten the public on United Nations peace-keeping operations. The

(Mr. Ayewah, Nigeria)

establishment of an annual peace-keeping fellowship by the United Nations would also serve that purpose while furthering personnel training.

12. Inadequate funding was a major obstacle to peace-keeping operations. Their financial base must be strengthened to allow the United Nations to respond swiftly to any emergency situation affecting peace and security. The maintenance of peace was a collective responsibility of the international community. Troop-contributing countries should not be made to bear alone the cost of peace-keeping operations. A permanent solution had to be found, in conformity with the accepted United Nations scale of assessment based on the ability to pay, together with supplementary assistance through voluntary contributions from wealthier States. Nigeria reiterated its call for the establishment of a special fund for peace-keeping operations. Also, since the work of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations was constantly expanding, his delegation proposed the establishment of a separate department within the the Secretariat, reporting to the Special Committee and dealing with all peace-keeping issues. It also urged the unanimous adoption of draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.9, reflecting the agreements and conclusions reached at the latest session of the Special Committee.

13. Nigeria paid warm tribute to the troop-contributing countries and in particular to the men and women who had served and would serve as peace-keepers.

14. Colonel FRASER (Canada) said that his country saw particular merits in certain areas discussed in document A/46/254, namely: the potential for the Special Committee to increase its relevance by means of intersessional meetings; the possibility of an overall review being conducted to improve the coordination and management of those elements of the Secretariat concerned with peace-keeping; the decision to continue studying the various facets of preventive peace-keeping; and the increased attention given to peace-keeping as an adjunct to activities, such as election monitoring and cease-fire supervision, normally regarded as internal matters.

15. Canada was participating in all of the five peace-keeping missions established over the last year, as well as in four other long-standing operations. Its support for the United Nations peace-keeping activities, as recently substantiated in its latest statement of defence policy, was thus confirmed. Equally, it looked forward to continued support for such operations from the permanent members of the Security Council, all of whom, it had been pleased to note, had participated in the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

16. With respect to training, Canada supported all the conclusions and recommendations contained in document A/46/254, but recognized that their interpretation was contingent upon the defence policy of each individual nation, the composition of its various national forces and so on. Canada would shortly produce a paper describing its training in support of

(Colonel Fraser, Canada)

peace-keeping operations and identifying programmes and activities which other States could pursue further or where they could acquire observer status. Canada was also willing to send briefing teams to provide further explanation of its policies and their implementation to interested countries, and would annually inform the United Nations of Canadian symposia, seminars and the like which might be open to overseas participants.

17. Without the requisite personnel and equipment, however, training would be ineffectual. Canada strongly advocated the existence of an up-to-date register to indicate the peace-keeping resources potentially available to the Secretary-General, and would accordingly be submitting information updating its response to the questionnaire on the subject. It urged all States to respond to the questionnaire and to provide an annual update. It also supported the development of a complementary questionnaire on civilian resources, and encouraged the Secretariat to establish a data bank from the accumulated material.

18. Optimum training and equipment notwithstanding, United Nations personnel could not hope to accomplish assigned missions without a secure financial basis. Canada firmly believed that general peace-keeping expenses should be assessed on the entire membership of the Organization. Such funds, along with voluntary contributions, should be flexibly and cost-effectively administered, in which context Canada would, in the Fifth Committee, submit ideas with a view to ensuring greater financial security for the mounting and sustainment of peace-keeping operations. It firmly believed, moreover, that the Special Political Committee itself should reinforce the work of the Fifth Committee by sending a strong signal of political will.

19. Canada was confident that its promised study on the personnel and political implications of employing high technology in peace-keeping would be available by the end of 1991. Meanwhile, it was also in the process of preparing a list - for distribution at the end of April 1992 - of the technological equipment currently on the market which might be useful in field operations.

20. His delegation fully supported the increasing role, where appropriate, of the United Nations civilian police. However, in view of the difficulties experienced in obtaining specific information on its operations, the absence of an equivalent of the Military Adviser's Office should perhaps be addressed. As for the use of civilians in peace-keeping operations, it was acceptable to employ international staff of the United Nations in that context, as well as civilians provided by States for the task of monitoring elections and human rights. It was also acceptable to award contracts to cost-effective civilian companies, provided there was no loss of operational capability, but Canada had reservations regarding the employment of civilians in traditional military roles. It therefore intended to offer only military personnel for peace-keeping operations, as they were infinitely more suitable, having been specifically recruited, organized and trained for such purposes.

(Colonel Fraser, Canada)

21. While pleased to note the recommendation to the Secretary-General regarding Singapore's earlier proposal on peace-keeping fellowships, Canada felt that limiting participation to those involved in peace-keeping operations was too narrow. It would welcome the inclusion of military and civilian personnel involved in operational and policy affairs in defence and foreign ministries, and would not be averse to the notion of establishing such fellowships with the funds awarded with the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to United Nations Peace-keepers.

22. Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland) took the Chair.

23. Mr. WAN JUNAIDI (Malaysia) highlighted the increased involvement, both quantitative and qualitative, which the United Nations now had in peace-keeping operations. Malaysian support for such operations had been demonstrated by its contribution of military and police personnel to four recent United Nations peace-keeping missions. His country firmly believed that the role of the United Nations peace-keeping forces should be expanded, particularly in view of the international consensus regarding the Organization's central role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Moreover, events in the Gulf had demonstrated that top priority should be given to establishing a mechanism for the prevention of conflict. In that respect, Malaysia endorsed strengthening the authority of the Secretary-General and also stressed the need to ensure that the Organization had modern technology, including sophisticated surveillance and early warning equipment, at its disposal.

24. Regarding the cost-effectiveness of peace-keeping operations, Malaysia agreed that a sounder financial basis was required. Unless all Member States fulfilled their financial obligations promptly as befitted their collective responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, the huge deficits recorded would grow more acute as new operations were mounted. Malaysia also held the view that the sources of finance should be diversified to include voluntary contributions from Member States and regional, non-governmental and private organizations. Moreover, the burden on financial and human resources could be alleviated if the Security Council were to limit the time-frame of peace-keeping operations and urge a permanent peace settlement within the specified period. The Security Council should likewise constantly review any long-standing operations where no peace settlement was forthcoming, given that peace-keeping activities should not be regarded as anything other than a temporary measure.

25. Training was essential to enhancing the effectiveness of peace-keeping operations; the training guidelines issued by the Secretariat should be constantly updated to take account of changing situations and should also cover programmes for civilian personnel. In view of the increasing number and diversity of potential peace-keeping operations, the Secretariat had a pivotal role to play in formulating a coordinated approach to training and maintaining a register of the training programmes in which Member States could

(Mr. Wan Junaidi, Malaysia)

participate. Finally, Malaysia welcomed the establishment of the Senior Planning and Monitoring Group on Peace-keeping Operations and its Peace-keeping Planning Sub-Group, which should improve the capacity to plan and coordinate new and existing peace-keeping operations.

26. Mr. SUMI (Japan) said that his Government was especially pleased with the course of the discussions in the Special Committee: the need to establish a focal point for all training-related activities in the Secretariat and to enable Member States to acquire information on peace-keeping operations with ease had been emphasized; inter-sessional informal consultations had been encouraged; and new activities, such as conflict prevention and election monitoring, were to be explored.

27. Given the increasingly complex and varied nature of peace-keeping operations, the importance of communication between Member States and the Secretariat could not be overemphasized. Similarly, Member States should regularly meet to exchange views on any matters which arose, while the Committee should avail itself of the opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations peace-keeping operations.

28. Parties in conflict should exert every effort to achieve a peaceful settlement, bearing in mind that peace-keeping operations were merely a temporary arrangement. To that end, they should seriously endeavour to reduce their respective military strengths, thereby enabling the United Nations in turn to reduce the number of personnel deployed in maintaining peace between the parties concerned. They should also provide maximum assistance to the United Nations in order to facilitate peace-keeping operations and alleviate the financial burdens imposed on Member States as a result.

29. Financing peace-making efforts for the start-up of new operations was another source of concern. Japan had donated $US 6 million to the trust fund established to cover the expanding peace-keeping activities, and urged those countries which had not already made contributions to do so. It was eager to join those States which had generously contributed personnel to United Nations peace-keeping efforts, and was studying ways of broadening its participation, such as the consideration currently being given to providing civilian personnel and officers from the Japanese Self-Defence Forces.

30. Miss TRUJILLO (Venezuela) said that with the increasing demand for peace-keeping operations and for conflict resolution by the Secretary-General, it was vital to maintain the close cooperation between the many Secretariat units working in that area.

31. The new world order that was taking shape had focused public attention on the role of the Organization in maintaining peace and security, and the current climate of understanding had fostered the resolution of regional conflicts, with United Nations involvement in the establishment of peace-keeping operations, such as those in Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq, Nicaragua, Namibia, El Salvador, Iraq-Kuwait and, soon, in Western Sahara and Cambodia.

(Miss Trujillo, Venezuela)

32. As a nation dedicated to peace, Venezuela always promoted the peaceful settlement of disputes. It had contributed a reserve battalion to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia and a battalion to ONUCA, and currently had official observers with UNIKOM, MINURSO and ONUSAL.

33. Peace-keeping operations had become an indispensable political instrument in guaranteeing peace, and they could also be made into an instrument for preventing conflicts and serving other purposes not previously envisaged. The evolving concept of peace-keeping needed to be kept under advisement by Member States, and must always be understood within the terms of the Charter.

34. Prior to launching any peace-keeping operation, careful study of the specific situation was called for in order to determine the type of operation required. Complications and delays could arise because of the complex political considerations governing any given situation, and peace-keeping operations thus required prior political consensus reflecting the will of the parties involved to ensure attainment of the agreed objectives.

35. Financing peace-keeping operations was the collective responsibility of all Member States. To limit their use on grounds of expense would run counter to the Organization's reason for being. In any case, it should be noted that the cost of peace-keeping operations was infinitesimal when compared with the military expenditures of many countries or with the losses resulting from war. The goal should rather be to expand peace-keeping operations and make them more effective, so that they could be concluded as rapidly as possible. That would require Security Council support, a clear and practical mandate for each operation that could be revised as needed, flexibility and the political will to settle the conflict on the part of the parties involved, the readiness of Member States to contribute requisite forces and equipment, and a clear mandate from the United Nations, with participation by the Secretary-General in the planning and direction of each operation.

36. A political decision to establish peace and create the climate for a negotiated solution must precede every operation. Its financial implications and military, civilian, logistic and technical aspects must be reviewed in detail by experts.

37. Although Venezuela regarded the model agreement between the United Nations and Member States contributing personnel and equipment to United Nations peace-keeping operations, put forward in document A/46/185, as a good reference text, it did not agree that disputes between the United Nations and the participating State regarding the application of the agreement should be submitted to arbitration at the request of only one of the parties, as stipulated in paragraph 29, but rather only if both parties agreed to seek arbitration.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.